

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics. Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

IS GRANT TRYING TO FORM A PERSONAL PARTY?

From the N. Y. Sun. It has been cautiously but significantly given out that General Grant intends in every event to be a candidate for re-election. This being so, it seems impossible to account for his persistent pursuit of a policy which directly tends to the destruction of the Republican party, except upon the hypothesis that he is resorting to the desperate expedient of trying to form a personal party, and run as its nominee in 1872 over the ruins of the organization that in 1868 placed him in the White House.

Though the attempt to organize a personal political party is hostile to the genius of our institutions, it is not beneath the ambition of a really great man. The attempt to form such a party in this country has been made in two conspicuous instances. De Witt Clinton tried it in the State of New York, and General Jackson on the wider theatre of the Union. Each possessed mental and personal qualities admirably adapted to give the experiment the best possible show for success, and both made the endeavor at periods in our political history when, if ever, the attempt might have been crowned with triumph.

Clinton was a statesman of the broadest views and the highest reach of intellect, a skillful and successful politician, a man whose will and indomitable courage, who idolized the State of New York, to which he and his family had rendered distinguished services. He made the effort to form a personal party during the war with England, when the Federal party was going to pieces. But, when he ran for the Presidency in opposition to Madison, a very unpopular candidate, though he was able to carry his own State by a peculiar combination of circumstances, he failed to obtain the vote of any other Republican State, and was ignominiously beaten.

With political prospects seemingly blasted forever, Clinton soon prosecuted the policy of constructing our present canals. The war was over, old issues had passed away, party lines were partially obliterated, and the public mind of New York was prepared to appreciate the bold conception of connecting the western and northern lakes with the Hudson river by means of the Erie and Champlain canals. There was a strong Clintonian party in existence; but throughout the dozen years that intervened between the bright day when Clinton, spade in hand, amid the booming of cannon and the acclamations of thousands of spectators, broke ground for the Erie Canal, down to the wintry night when, in the quiet of his library, while preparing a message to the Legislature, the pen dropped from his hand and his heart ceased to beat, it was not the Clintonian party that gave him victory in his memorable contests with Tompkins, Tallmadge, Rost, and Van Buren, but it was the canals that always tided him over all obstacles, and bore him in triumph to the State Capitol.

But Governor Clinton's partially successful effort to form a personal party in New York deprived him of a political following in the other portions of the Union, and neither of the great parties of the country would accept him as their leader. Though one of the ablest of statesmen in the republic, he attained and kept power in this State by moles which rendered his election to the Presidency an impossibility.

General Jackson's attempt to form a personal party was a more signal failure than that of Governor Clinton. The victory of New Orleans had given him a wide popularity. Amid the dissolution of parties in the Monroe era, he wrote a series of letters clearly indicating that he was in favor of forming a political combination out of the dissolving factions, of which he was to be the central figure. His bold ideas, his military fame, his lofty courage, his inflexible will, the irresistible magnetism which he shed all around him, his political catholicity, the chaotic condition of old organizations, and his position as the representative man of the Mississippi valley, all seemed to indicate that Jackson's efforts to found a personal party might be crowned with success. He tried the experiment as a Presidential candidate in 1824, backed by a numerous and powerful body of friends, and he failed. He then fell into wiser hands. The Democratic Republican party made him their candidate against Mr. Adams, and he was elected. Since that event nobody has tried to organize a personal party on any considerable scale, unless we include in this category the ridiculous failures of John Tyler and Andrew Johnson.

To compare General Grant as a statesman of ideas, as a politician capable of drawing around him and binding to his standard incongruous elements, as a civil leader in difficult times, whose words and example can electrify the masses of the people—we say, to attempt to compare him with De Witt Clinton or Andrew Jackson, borders on the absurd. And yet, it looks as if he was going to try the experiment of forming a personal party to perpetuate his feeble hold upon the Presidency. That he will fail in a field where Clinton and Jackson did not succeed, is a foregone conclusion. The wonder is that he should be so foolish as to make the attempt.

General Grant's attachment to the Republican party is very weak. Indeed, he never belonged to it, nor even claimed to belong to it until it had become necessary to his elevation. Previous to his inauguration he informed Mr. McClure of Pennsylvania that he had not been a Republican. His selection of a Cabinet verifies this declaration. Not a member of it was the choice for that position of the Republican party of the State whence he came. With perhaps one exception they are men of very moderate attainments, sinking into dwarfs by the side of the distinguished leaders of the party, and therefore owing their elevation solely to him, and likely to wield the great influence of their positions for the promotion of his ambitious schemes and the gratification of his personal aspirations.

The many strange appointments he has made, and, indeed, the general distribution of his patronage, seem to spring from the same motive as that which controlled the selection of his Cabinet. He likes to be surrounded by small men in the White House and the departments, who will owe their advancement solely to him. He desires to be followed by a train of buffoons through the country, many of them incompetent and extremely unpopular, some of them dishonest, and the great body of them without any claims upon the Republican party; but like the Swiss guards of Louis, they will fight for the chieftain who discovered their merits and pays their wages.

Upon what other principle than the hypothesis we have suggested can we account for General Grant's appointing so many of his relatives to office? How otherwise can we

explain his readiness to confer high and lucrative places upon those who have given him valuable presents, thus suggesting unfavorable comparisons between himself and Andrew Johnson, whom he was so eager to drive from the White House by an impeachment? How else can we account for his alacrity to accept gifts from anybody, and of any kind, from houses and lands down to horses and dogs, thus sinking his great office into contempt before all the people? Knowing that this disgraceful practice will of itself so bring him into reproach as to render it impossible for the Republican party to renominate him, that it tends directly to the destruction of the confiding organization which made him President, he must look upon the destruction of the party with cool indifference, though determined "to make a good thing out of it while it lasts," and resolved, through the agency of a "Grant party," to take his chances for a re-election in 1872.

That General Grant will be utterly disappointed in his personal aspirations, it needs no prophet to predict. That he may succeed in ruining the party which trusted him is quite possible. That he will be able to advance even in sight of the point where Clinton and Jackson failed, is to the last degree improbable. That he will be dismissed from the White House on the 4th of March, 1873, with the same indifference, not to say contempt, that followed the departure of John Tyler and Andrew Johnson, history will doubtless record.

HOW TO RETRENCH.

From the N. Y. Tribune. How well certain underground premises are paved with good intentions, most people have heard. Merely to will, in a vague, lukewarm fashion, that wrongs should be righted, does not right them. We have had talk enough about retrenchment, and that policy would seem to have a superabundance of friends; yet they served it as a bushel of snowballs might a cold tea-kettle which they were expected to raise to the boiling point by an evolution of their latent heat. We propose to offer a few suggestions to those members of Congress who are heartily desirous of reducing the national expenditures.

I. Our naval service is too costly. We need not keep so many vessels afloat in a time of general peace. We have too many officers on duty, and far too many drawing pay for whom no duty can be invented. Congress ought to cut down our naval establishment, and direct that all superfluous officers be mustered out. We cannot afford to pay men for doing nothing, nor to find or make work for those who have nothing to do.

II. It is monstrous impolicy to lay up old vessels in ordinary, and pay men to look on while they rot. Better sell them, if only for so much scrap-iron and green-wood. When we come to want fighting vessels again these will be found entirely out of date, if not ruined by corrosion. Sell them, if only to be broken up.

III. We have too many navy yards. We believe both the Brooklyn and Philadelphia should be discontinued and sold out. If our yard were forty miles up the Hudson, it would be safer from hostile assault or skulking treason, and it ought not to cost half to remove it that the present site would sell for. So the Charlestown yard should be given up or consolidated with the Portsmouth. It is thoroughly imbedded in a dense population, and should be promptly extricated. We would suggest Portsmouth, West Point, and some place just above New Orleans on the Mississippi (instead of Pensacola) as the locations for our three only navy yards, selling out all the others.

IV. Our army should be cut down one-half—we mean the officers. Four regiments of good dragoons, well led, would be worth twenty regiments of infantry and artillery on the plains. Railroads are our true peace-makers. Run one through Arizona and another through our Northern territories, appoint honest Quakers for Indian agents, and subject all who sell "fire-water" to Indians to drummed court-martial—taking care first to burn their liquor if it will burn, and destroy it some other way if it will not—and four regiments of dragoons will better guard our settlements than our army now does. Let our regiments be few, and let all supernumerary officers be mustered out forthwith.

V. We have a large assortment of mints, assay offices, etc., which seem to us not particularly ornamental while not at all useful. Let us have some of them sold out—that at Denver, for one. It is not earning its salt, and its prospect is not improving. We have more mints and assay offices than we had fifteen to twenty years ago, when we were producing far more gold and silver than now. Let every one of us who has the annual cost is more than one per cent. of the metal coined or assayed therein. If that rule should condemn our assay office, abolish it.

VI. If we shall be so fortunate as to get rid of the franking privilege, let the cost of printing for Congress be cut down at least half, and dismiss the army of holders, backers, etc., lodged in the vaults of the Capitol. The contingent expenses of Congress should surely be reduced one-half.

VII. As to judicial and other salaries, it should be borne in mind that, through the appreciation of our currency, they are at least twenty per cent. higher than they were ten years ago, and will be at least ten per cent. higher still whenever we shall have returned to specie payments. Hasten that happy day!—The above are but points. They might be largely extended. Republicans in Congress! the country expects much of you in the way of retrenchment. Let her not be disappointed!

BOUTWELL AS A SEAL FISHER. From the N. Y. World. The busy brain of Boutwell contains convolutions which the ordinary mind is quite incapable to enumerate or to comprehend. But even all the fertility of resources which he has heretofore displayed is thrown into dim eclipse by his recent financial device, whereby he purposes to take under his own immediate control the fisheries of Alaska.

of man that we should forget in the fresh agonies daily inflicted upon us by a Boutwell the pang which we were wont to suffer from a Seward. By comparison with the administration of President Grant, the administration of President Lincoln has been lifted into sublimity; and by the standard of a Boutwell, the memory of a Seward has come to seem an admirable and pleasant thing. Nevertheless, it must be owned he was a nuisance. Let alone the outrages upon public justice and private freedom which he prostituted his position to perpetrate, have we forgotten the dreary oratory which he used to deliver in soliloquy in the garden of his sweet retreat at Auburn, and which he subsequently procured to be printed? The general public, too happy, like Virgil's husbandman, if only he had known his own happiness, could refrain from reading these utterances of the sibilant Seward. But what a lamentable waste of duty it was to waste through that weary wate of words, if haply he could find floating therein some faint foreshadowing of a coherent notion or some fragment of exposition of official policy, has forgotten the horrors of the task? The speech entered into his soul. But Mr. Seward was no telegraph through which he might promulgate himself. There was no newspaper to print him. There were no frequent postal facilities by which he could devastate the newspapers of his distant home. There was even no audience which could write under his name. Of course, he made speeches. As with the dogs of the fervid Watts, it was his nature to do. But he could not inflict them upon other people. He addressed the Oregon, and heard no sound, save his own dashing. Sweet peace came upon us, and the land had rest.

But, though Seward was thus an element in the sum of human misery, we cheerfully concede that he was as balmy to Boutwell. In his arrests, indeed, he fell alike upon the evil and the good. But the much more serious infliction of his eloquence only embittered the lives of those who for their sins were condemned, or under whose deprivations they were elected, to undergo it. But the bitterness of Boutwell comes home to the business and bosom of every man. He is about our bed and about our path, and springing out, for purposes of revenue, all our ways. The performance of any commercial transaction whatever involves a certain votive offering to the inefficiency with which he has managed the finances of the nation. Let him by all means go to Alaska and skin seals. That will really add to the national wealth, and it will immeasurably enhance the national happiness. He may, indeed, come back. But he will in the meantime have at least learned how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be strong. He might be easily borne with in a subdued condition. See how much a sojourn in Sitka has improved Mr. Seward. He has actually declined a public reception. Does anybody suppose that the unregenerate Seward whom we knew before he had been purged and chastened by a course of frozen tallow and walrus-blubber would not have leaped into the embraces of any municipality which offered him such an opportunity for the public utterance of his bland unintelligibilities? Who knows but that Boutwell might return to us in a similarly frozen frame of mind? Of course, there is no hope that Mr. Seward is congealed into permanent silence. The fruit of his wit, gained by the pill that he will, and he will gush again. But even the temporary absence of Boutwell would give us a chance to establish the finances beyond even his powers of prostration. And even the temporary absence of Boutwell would, in any case, be such a boon that we need not inquire, with too curious a solicitude, into what may happen after he comes back.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE ELECTION—REPUBLICANS STILL IN THE ASCENDANT. From the N. Y. Herald. The returns indicate that at the election in New Hampshire the Republicans succeeded in retaining their ascendancy in the State, electing their candidate for Governor and securing a majority in the Legislature. This will send Mr. Cragin back to the United States Senate, and as he is an ardent friend of the administration of General Grant, his return to the Senate chamber may be regarded as among the most important results of the election.

The vote was large, but the Republican majority was considerably reduced, being only about fifteen hundred against between three and four thousand last year. The heavy vote may be accounted for from the fact that the seignior was "god" from the sea to the Coos, above the Upper Coos, giving all parties a fair chance to test their relative strength at the polls. Why did not the Democracy carry the State? Let us see.

But a few days ago the Democracy of New Hampshire never had a brighter prospect to redeem the State from radical thralldom. The eruptions among the radicals, the throwing up of such segments as the labor reform faction under Sam Flint, and the temperance faction under the Rev. Mr. Barrows, afforded them opportunities of conciliating a respectable portion of the radical party, and winning them permanently to the Democratic side. Some of the prominent Democratic papers in the State, and the most prominent Democratic organs, were in favor of a recognition of the radical malcontents. On the other hand, the radical Democrats spurned the idea of affiliation in any manner with their ancient foes, come in what garb they might. What followed? A regular pug nuss between the Democratic State Central Committee and the State Central organ, in which words common to the New York radical press, such as "unmitigated liars," "you lie, you villain," and other elegant phrases were bandied between them. Thus was a little private arrangement between the Democratic leaders and a few leading radical seceders knocked into a cocked hat, not absolutely by the defection of the anti-radicals themselves, but by the squabbles and wrangles, and jobbing railroad collisions among the Democrats themselves.

Taking advantage of this Democratic discord, the radicals threw their whole strength into the canvass. From every section radical orators poured into the hills and valleys of the Granite State. The departments and the halls of Congress in Washington sent their orators to arouse their quailing and quivering clans. The grandeur of General Grant's military achievements was again depicted. The opposition to his statescraft was shown to be a weak invention of the enemy. The financial measures of his administration were presented in a strong light. The reduction of the national debt, the reduction in the price of gold, the gradual approach to the granite foundation of all trade, commerce, and nationality—specie payments—were portrayed in a light that first dazzled the eyes and then won the hearts of those radicals who were wavering in fidelity to the administration of their choice. Patriotic as the sons of New Hampshire are, and warmly sympathizing as they do with people struggling for freedom, the lukewarmness of the administration in

regard to the non-recognition of the independence of Cuba was offset by the notorious and pregnant fact that a well-known New Hampshire Democrat, once occupying a high position in the affections of the New Hampshire people, and in the confidence of a New Hampshire ex-President, was and is now a paid advocate in the service of Spain to crush out republican liberty on the island of Cuba.

Our copious despatches render further comment upon the results of the first gun of the political campaign unnecessary. We must say, however, that in our opinion it was only the personal popularity of General Grant and the abominable dissensions and atrocious and inconceivably stupid conduct of the Democratic managers that plucked from the Democracy of New Hampshire the plume of leading the Democracy of the nation to certain success in 1872. Let the discordant Democracy in other States take warning.

SOUTHERN SENTIMENT AND POLICY.

From the N. Y. Times. Several Southern journals respond to the ideas recently advanced in these columns in regard to the true reconstruction policy of the South. It will be remembered that we deprecated the longer continuance of the ancient sectional animosities which existed previous to and during the war, and counselled an acceptance by the South of the fundamental political consequences which have since been permitted to exist. We did this upon the ground that the old political antagonisms had been submitted to the tribunal of *demerit resort*, the wager of battle, and had been decided adversely to the South; that in the resulting adjustments the South had no voice; that those adjustments being fully agreed upon and settled, forbearance and amnesty to the South became the duty as well as the true policy of the North; and finally, that all this had developed a corresponding obligation on the part of the South to forego its obstruction and accept the result in a spirit of restored nationality.

In reply to these ideas, it is urged that the South has not been permitted to exercise any free will in the resumption of its status in the Union, and that no obligation, therefore, rests upon it. In the very nature of things, such a concession could not have been made. It would have been ridiculous to have consulted an enemy fresh from battle-fields, with hearts still beating with rage and bitter hatred, as to the conditions of peace, or the political status of the future. Of course, the South would have clung to the issues upon which the war was fought; in fact, we have seen that from the moment the Rebel armies laid down their arms, they took up the same old arguments they had used previous to the war. They have done little else than cry out against usurpation and tyranny, and military despotism, and the intrusion of Northern people, ever since.

It was unfortunate for the whole country, and especially for the South, that the process of reconstruction was embarrassed and prolonged. Had it been consummated four years ago—even upon the basis finally adopted—we should have encountered less opposition, North as well as South. The ex- Rebels certainly had a more submissive temper than now, and what seems almost mendacious in 1870 would have been accepted by them as unexpectedly lenient in 1867. They had a chastened spirit then which held their assertion in check.

We do not want the South to be humiliated or politically disabled, and we do not expect that its people will charge its purely social organization. We do maintain, however, that it ought, cheerfully and sincerely, to lay aside its revived sectional prejudice, together with all the old heresies which brought on the war. It must put away the idea that a State is in any respect greater than the nation, and that there is any one class of men whose political rights are less than those of another's. We would freely and fully concede to our Southern brethren equal freedom with ourselves to regulate their social, industrial, and political affairs under the Constitution. We would place them side by side with us in those respects, but not one step in advance or to the one side or the other of us.

With regard to the future but little can be said. The South holds its political destiny in its own hands, subject only to the restrictions of the Constitution as amended, and the spirit, either of conformation or resistance, which shall prevail. If it shall content against accomplishment, and seek to revive dead issues, it can only retard its own material prosperity, and reject that equal participation in the political action of the future which we feel confident the moderate sentiment of the North is anxious to tender.

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